would be correspondingly reduced. The panel according to this invention effectively solves this problem by the unique construction of the barrier which is not readily collapsed and, even when it has been more or less collapsed, able to restore a sufficient thickness dimension to maintain a desired absorbing capacity for body fluids.- -

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claim 1 as follows:

1. (Amended) A body fluid absorbent panel for a sanitary wearing article comprising a fibrous web having a compression resilience, said fibrous web comprising a plurality of openings extending therethrough in a direction of a thickness of the fibrous web, and barriers surrounding and defining said openings,

said barriers comprising a shape keeping layer formed from a plurality of thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers and a body fluid retaining layer placed upon one of an upper surface and a lower surface of said shape holding layer and formed from a plurality of thermoplastic synthetic resin fibers mixed with an absorbent material,

said synthetic resin fibers being hot welded together at contact points thereof in said shape keeping layer as well as in said body fluid retaining layer and said synthetic resin fibers of said shape keeping layer and said body fluid retaining layer being hot welded together along an interface at contact points of said synthetic resin fibers.

Please amend Claim 2 as follows:

2. (Amended) The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein said absorbent material comprises a hot weldable high absorbent polymer component in the form of at least one of high absorption polymer particles and a plurality of liquid-absorbent fibers made

of high absorption polymer, said synthetic resin fibers and said high absorbent polymer component being hot welded together at contact points thereof in said body fluid retaining layer and said synthetic resin fibers of said shape keeping layer and said high absorbent polymer component of said body fluid retaining layer being hot welded together at contact points thereof along said interface of said shape keeping layer and said body fluid retaining layer.

Please amend Claim 3 as follows:

3. (Amended) The body fluid absorbent panel according Claim 1, wherein said barriers comprises a plurality of first barriers extending in parallel to and spaced apart from one another in a first direction and a plurality of second barriers extending in parallel to and spaced apart from one another in a second direction intersecting said first barriers and each of the openings is defined by a pair of adjacent first barriers and a pair of adjacent second barriers intersecting a pair of adjacent first barriers.

Please amend Claim 4 as follows:

4. (Amended) The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, comprising at least two of said panels which are placed upon each other in a thickness direction so that openings formed in upper one of said panels are divided by at least in two sections by barriers formed in a panel immediately underlying said upper one of said panels.

Please amend Claim 5 as follows:

5. (Amended) The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein an open area ratio of said openings to said panel is in a range of from about 20 to about 80% and a total area of said openings is in a range of from about 10 to about 1600 mm^2.

Please amend Claim 6 as follows:

6. (Amended) The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein a compression resilience of said barriers is in a range of from about 20 to about 80%.

Please amend Claim 7 as follows:

7. (Amended) The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein a ratio between said shape keeping layer and said body fluid retaining layer with respect to a dimension of said barriers as measured in its thickness direction is in a range of 6:4 to 8:2.

Claim 8 remains unchanged.

Please amend Claim 9 as follows:

9. The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 1, wherein a mat-like liquid-absorbent core substantially without any openings is provided on a lower surface of said panel.

Please add new Claim 10 as follows:

--10. The body fluid absorbent panel according to Claim 4, wherein an open area ratio of said openings to said panel is in a range of from about 20 to about 80% and a total area of said openings is in a range of form about 10 to about 1600 mm^2 and wherein a total area of said openings in said upper panel are less than or equal to a total area of said openings in the panel immediately underlying said upper panel.--

Please add new Claim 11 as follows: